

# Love At Last

*by* Matt DeVirgiliis

George remembered when Gwen first moved next-door — second grade - her brunette ringlets swung behind her as she explored her new home. They would eventually meet, shake hands, and agree to put a string with cups attached between their windows. George stayed up late every night, watching her bedroom light flicker on, her shadow float by the shade. No call.

They shared a lot through the years — a bus stop, acne, and first kiss stories. George was happy to be her confidant, good enough friends to help shoulder her burdens. But he wanted to push her curls back behind her ear and trace her soft cheek with his fingertips. He didn't.

She went to Michigan State and he went to NYU. On occasional Saturday nights (Sunday mornings) his instant messenger would pop up — “Hey, you.” They would chat until one of them passed out.

Gwen was engaged to some guy from college. Love. Marriage. Babies. George pushed on. Focused on work - corporate attorney — his other passion. An occasional Christmas card came.

Gwen moved into the assisted living apartment next to his. Her husband long passed. Her silver ringlets bounced as she hobbled around her new dwelling. They played bridge and bingo. Saturday nights they danced in the hall. He walked her to her door and kissed her goodnight. He pushed her hair back behind her ear and traced her cheek with his fingertips.

